

ITEM 9-B

PLANNING BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 8, 2010

TO: Honorable President and Members of the
Planning Board

FROM: Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager
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Subject: Presentation of the Draft North Park Street Regulating Code

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the November 8, 2010 presentation is to provide staff an opportunity to introduce the draft North Park Street Zoning Code to the Planning Board and community. At the meeting, the staff and consultant team will explain the major components of the draft Code.

The North Park Street Code represents a comprehensive zoning update and revision for a large and important part of the City. The Code covers those areas bounded by the Oakland Alameda Estuary, Tilden/Lincoln, and Oak Street (approximately 20 blocks of commercial, residential and industrial land uses). Given the scope and importance of the draft Code, staff is recommending that the Planning Board and the community take three months to review the code and develop any recommended changes to the draft document. Staff would then like to hold a public hearing with the Planning Board in February to discuss any proposed changes and prepare a final draft for recommendation to the City Council. During this time, staff will be preparing the environmental review documents and recommendations for improvements to the public right of way and major infrastructure systems that may be necessary to support redevelopment of the area.

BACKGROUND

In 2007 and 2008, the City of Alameda with assistance from Park Street Business Association (PSBA), the larger Alameda community, and a consultant team, led by The City Design Collective prepared the "Gateway District Strategic Plan". The Strategic Plan established a redevelopment concept for the commercial "gateway" blocks along Park Street between the Estuary and Lincoln/Tilden. An extensive community outreach effort, community charrettes, open studios, and review and comment by a number of boards and commissions, including the Planning Board informed the Gateway Plan. In 2008, the Planning Board and the City Council endorsed the Gateway Plan to guide

future plans in the area.



In late 2008, the Planning and Building Department engaged The City Design Collective to prepare a new zoning ordinance for the area consistent with the concepts described in the Gateway Plan. At that time it was also decided to expand the area to include the blocks between Everett, the Estuary, and Tilden Way.

After some delay as the result of staff reorganizations and other citywide development priorities, staff is now pleased to be able to make the draft Code available for Planning Board and community review.

ANALYSIS

At the November 8, 2010 meeting, staff and The City Design Collective will present the draft code to the Planning Board and the community. In preparation for that presentation, the Board and the community should be aware of the following Planning Department objectives and assumptions that have informed this effort:

1. The Guiding Document: The 2008 Gateway Plan is the guiding document for this effort. The draft Code is designed to create zoning regulations that will ensure that development is consistent with the community's vision as articulated in the 2008 Gateway Plan.
2. New Development Standards: With the departure of "auto row" from the area, significant change in the form of new development and new building construction will be necessary to achieve the goals of the Gateway Plan. Unlike the more established, historic area of Park Street from Tilden to San Jose, north Park Street does not include a large number of existing historic buildings that can be relied upon to establish a design standard for new development. *For these reasons, the North Park Street Code must do a good job of articulating design standards for North Park Street.*
3. Successful Economic Development in a Weak Economy. The economic outlook for the next few years is uncertain. Cities that hope to attract new, high quality commercial and/or commercial mixed-use developments will be in tight competition with other cities. North Park Street will be competing with locations on commercial boulevards in San Leandro, Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito, and other East Bay locations. Although Alameda has much to offer that the other cities cannot match, in many instances the city that can make a decision on a project and get the project into construction in shortest amount of time with the least amount of development entitlement "risk", will often win the competition for the new project. *For these reasons, the North Park Street code must do a good job of articulating what types of projects and building designs the City will approve without unnecessary delay.*
4. Preserving a Neighborhood. The North Park Street plan area includes an Alameda residential neighborhood that surrounds the commercial core. This neighborhood includes traditional Alameda homes, former homes that have been converted to non-residential uses, and industrial uses that are on blocks with residential uses. Although the close proximity of commercial uses, employment uses, and residential uses provides for a unique mixed use neighborhood, the close proximity of these uses has also resulted in land use conflicts. *The North Park Street code must successfully support a mixed use, pedestrian oriented, neighborhood, while avoiding unnecessary or unacceptable land use conflicts between incompatible uses.*

Given the extensive objectives for this effort, it is essential that the community and the Planning Board carefully examine and question the draft provisions. Therefore staff is recommending that the Planning Board provide the community until February 28, 2011 to review the document and provide written comments.

Documents for Review

Copies of the draft Code and the 2008 Gateway Plan are available to the public for purchase in the Community Development Department or at no cost on the City of Alameda website.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required at this time. This report is for information purposes only.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew Thomas
Planning Services Manager

Attachment:

1. Draft North Park Street Districts Regulating Code